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SPECIAL ECONOMIC AND DISASTER RELIEF ASSISTANCE

Implementation of the medium-term and long-term recovery and
rehabilitation programme in the Sudano-Sahelian region

Report of the Secretary-General

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* A/36/50.

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The plight of the Sudano-Sahelian countries has been under continuous consideration by the General Assembly and other United Nations bodies since 1971. The Assembly has repeatedly supported the recovery and rehabilitation efforts of the Sudano-Sahelian countries, at both national and regional levels, urging, inter alia, all States Members of the United Nations and other potential contributing sources, as well as United Nations organs, agencies and programmes, to help solve the pressing problems posed by the severity of droughts in the region. In this connexion, the General Assembly adopted, in particular, the following resolutions: 2816 (XXVI) of 14 December 1971, 2959 (XXVII) of 12 December 1972, 3054 (XXVIII) of 17 October 1973, 3253 (XXIX) of 4 December 1974, 3512 (XXX) of 15 December 1975, 31/180 of 21 December 1976, 32/159 of 19 December 1977, 33/133 of 19 December 1978, 34/16 of 9 November 1979 and 35/86 of 5 December 1980. The Economic and Social Council adopted, in particular, the following resolutions: 1759 (LIV) of 18 May 1973, 1797 (LV) of 11 July 1973, 1834 (LVI) of 14 May 1974, 1874 (LVII) of 16 July 1974, 1918 (LVIII) of 5 May 1975, 2103 (LXIII) of 3 August 1977, 1978/37 of 21 July 1978, 1979/51 of 2 August 1979 and 1980/51 of 23 July 1980.

2. The present report is submitted in accordance with paragraph 8 of General Assembly resolution 35/86, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to continue to report to it, through the Governing Council of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Economic and Social Council, on the implementation of the medium-term and long-term recovery and rehabilitation programme in the Sudano-Sahelian region.

3. The report deals with the activities of the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office (UNSO) under the mandate of the drought-related medium-term and long-term recovery and rehabilitation programme in the eight countries of the Sudano-Sahelian region which are members of the Permanent Inter-State Committee on Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS), namely, Cape Verde, Chad, the Gambia, Mali, Mauritania, the Niger, Senegal and the Upper Volta. As explained in section VII, which deals primarily with UNSO-assisted priority projects, and in order to provide a comprehensive description of the situation at hand, the report also refers to some of the directly relevant activities undertaken in those eight countries by UNSO under its mandate relating to the implementation in the Sudano-Sahelian region, on behalf of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification. 1/

1/ The activities of UNSO regarding the group of designated countries of the Sudano-Sahelian and adjacent regions, including the eight States members of CILSS, relating to the implementation of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification, are described in detail in the report to be submitted to the General Assembly by the Governing Council of UNEP in accordance with Assembly resolution 35/72 of 5 December 1980. The present report should, therefore, be read in conjunction with the report of the Governing Council of UNEP.

II. ACTION TAKEN BY THE GOVERNING COUNCIL OF THE
UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME AT ITS
TWENTY-SEVENTH SESSION

4. At its twenty-seventh session, held at Geneva from 2 to 30 June 1980, the Governing Council of UNDP adopted decision 80/35 on the implementation of the medium-term and long-term recovery and rehabilitation programme in the Sudano-Sahelian region.

5. In that decision, the Governing Council, inter alia, noted with satisfaction the decisive role played by UNSO in helping to combat the effects of the drought and to implement the priority medium-term and long-term recovery and rehabilitation programme adopted by the States members of CILSS and in mobilizing the necessary resources to finance priority projects; took note with satisfaction of the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the medium-term and long-term recovery and rehabilitation programme in the Sudano-Sahelian region (A/35/176); commended the Administrator for the results achieved by UNSO; expressed its gratitude to the Governments, United Nations agencies and other intergovernmental organizations, private organizations and individuals that had contributed to the implementation of the medium-term and long-term recovery and rehabilitation programme in the Sudano-Sahelian region and urged them to continue; authorized the Administrator to continue to grant, from unallocated funds, the countries of the Sahel affected by the drought which did not enjoy them the benefits given to the least developed countries until the consequences of the drought were eliminated; urged all Governments to make special efforts to enable UNSO to respond more fully to the priority requirements of the States members of CILSS; and requested the Administrator to continue to enhance the capacity of UNSO to respond effectively to the priority requirements of the States members of CILSS through the use of resources available in the Programme, particularly the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA), the United Nations Capital Development Fund and the United Nations Revolving Fund for Natural Resources Exploration.

6. Pursuant to the decision of the Governing Council, UNSO has taken a number of actions which are described in sections VI to VIII of the present report.

III. ACTION TAKEN BY THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL
AT ITS SECOND REGULAR SESSION OF 1980

7. At its second regular session of 1980, held at Geneva from 3 to 25 July 1980, the Economic and Social Council adopted resolution 1980/51, in which it, inter alia, took note with satisfaction of the report of the Secretary-General (A/35/176); expressed its profound gratitude to the Governments, agencies of the United Nations system, intergovernmental organizations, private organizations and individuals that had contributed to the implementation of the recovery, rehabilitation and development programmes in the Sahel; and strongly urged that all Governments make special efforts to increase the resources of UNSO, so as to enable it to respond more fully to the priority requirements of the Governments of the States members of CILSS. Furthermore, the Council urged all United Nations organs, agencies and

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programmes, especially UNDP, the World Bank, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the World Food Programme (WFP), to increase their assistance through joint undertakings with UNSO, in response to requests from the Governments of the Sudano-Saharan countries, for the implementation of their recovery, rehabilitation and development programmes; and invited the Secretary-General, together with the executive heads of the United Nations organs, agencies and programmes concerned, particularly UNDP, the World Bank, UNIDO, FAO, IFAD, WFP, as well as the International Labour Organisation (ILO), to engage in consultations to determine how they might best help to achieve the goal set forth above and thereby enhance the ability of UNSO to respond more adequately to the priority requirements of the States members of CILSS.

8. Those requests of the Council were subsequently endorsed by the General Assembly at its thirty-fifth session (see para. 10 below) and considered by the UNDP Interagency Consultative Meeting in December 1980. At present, consultations are being conducted with all United Nations organs, agencies and programmes concerned on the best means and methods of implementing the requests.

IV. ACTION TAKEN BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AT ITS THIRTY-FIFTH SESSION

9. At its thirty-fifth session, the General Assembly considered the report of the Secretary-General (A/35/176), which complemented and brought up to date his earlier reports on the implementation of the medium-term and long-term recovery and rehabilitation programme in the Sudano-Saharan region; the report had been submitted to the Assembly through the Governing Council of UNDP and the Economic and Social Council, in accordance with Assembly resolution 34/16. 2/

10. Having considered the report, the General Assembly adopted resolution 35/86, in which it, inter alia, noted with satisfaction the decisive role played by UNSO in helping to combat the effects of the drought and to implement the medium-term and long-term recovery and rehabilitation programme adopted by the States members of CILSS, and in mobilizing the necessary resources to finance priority projects; took note with satisfaction of the report of the Secretary-General; expressed its gratitude to the Governments, agencies of the United Nations system, intergovernmental organizations, private organizations and individuals that have contributed to the implementation of the medium-term and long-term recovery and rehabilitation programme in the Sudano-Saharan region; strongly urged all Governments to make special efforts to increase the resources of UNSO, including voluntary contributions through the United Nations Pledging Conference for Development Activities, so as to enable it to respond more fully to the priority

2/ The Assembly also had before it the report of the Governing Council of UNEP on the implementation in the Sudano-Saharan region of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification (A/35/411, annex, sect. III).

requirements of the Governments of the States members of CILSS; endorsed the urgent request addressed by the Economic and Social Council at its second regular session of 1980 to all United Nations organs, agencies and programmes to increase their assistance through joint undertakings with UNSO (see para. 7 above); called upon all Governments, agencies of the United Nations system, intergovernmental organizations, private organizations and individuals to continue to respond favourably, either bilaterally or through UNSO or any other intermediary, to requests for assistance from the Governments of the States members of CILSS and from the Committee itself; and invited UNSO to continue to strengthen its close co-operation with CILSS with a view to the implementation of the recovery and rehabilitation programme and of priority projects.

11. The General Assembly also adopted a number of other resolutions which relate closely to the activities of UNSO in medium-term and long-term recovery and rehabilitation programmes, in particular resolutions 35/18, in which the Assembly proclaimed the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade; 35/56, containing the International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade; 35/58 on special action related to the particular needs and problems of land-locked developing countries; 35/64 on special measures for the social and economic development of Africa in the 1980s; 35/69 on the situation of food and agriculture in Africa; 35/72 on the implementation in the Sudano-Sahelian region of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification; 3/ 35/73 on the implementation of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification; 35/74 on international co-operation in the field of the environment; 35/108 on the Transport and Communications Decade in Africa (see paras. 35 to 41 below); and 35/205 on the United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (see paras. 103 to 105 below). The General Assembly also adopted resolution 35/92 on assistance to Chad (see paras. 59 to 60 below), and resolution 35/104 on assistance to Cape Verde (see para. 49 below).

V. FUNCTIONS AND ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS SUDANO-SAHELIAN OFFICE

12. The United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office was established by the Secretary-General in 1973, pursuant to the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, in the aftermath of the severe drought of 1968-1973 which devastated economic and social life in the Sahel, to serve as the primary unit of the United Nations for (a) the co-ordination of the activities of the United Nations system related to the medium-term and long-term recovery and rehabilitation of the drought-stricken Sahelian countries; (b) the establishment and maintenance of close and effective working relationships with the Sahelian countries and their regional organization, the Permanent Inter-State Committee on Drought Control in the Sahel; and (c) the mobilization of the necessary resources for the implementation of the priority drought-related recovery and rehabilitation projects identified by the States members of CILSS. By 1980, UNSO had developed into the principal institution of the United Nations system in this area, with a mandate from the General Assembly to act as the central point and principal body responsible for

3/ See foot-note 1.

co-ordinating the efforts of United Nations agencies to help the countries of the Sahel, members of CILSS, to implement their medium-term and long-term recovery and rehabilitation programme.

13. As mentioned above, the number of countries assisted by UNSO under the mandate of recovery and rehabilitation is eight, reflecting the membership of CILSS, namely, Cape Verde, Chad, the Gambia, Mali, Mauritania, the Niger, Senegal and the Upper Volta.

14. In resolution 33/88 of 15 December 1978, the General Assembly designated UNSO, in addition to its original functions, as the arm of the United Nations to be responsible for assisting, on behalf of UNEP, the efforts of the 15 countries of the Sudano-Sahelian region situated south of the Sahara and north of the equator to implement the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification. The original 15 countries were: Cape Verde, Chad, Ethiopia, Gambia, Kenya, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Somalia, Sudan, Uganda, United Republic of Cameroon and Upper Volta.

15. In resolution 34/187 of 18 December 1979, the General Assembly invited the Governing Council of UNEP to examine the possibility of including Djibouti, Guinea and Guinea-Bissau in the list of countries receiving assistance, through UNSO, in implementing the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification. As a result of the positive consideration of that invitation by the Governing Councils of UNEP and UNDP, the three countries were added to the original list of 15 countries, a fact which was noted with satisfaction by the General Assembly at its thirty-fifth session, in resolution 35/72.

16. In resolution 35/72 the Assembly also invited the Governing Council of UNEP to examine at its next session the possibility of including Benin in the list of countries which receive assistance, through UNSO, in implementing the Plan of Action, and to report on the matter to the Assembly at its thirty-sixth session.

17. The efforts of UNSO, in assisting the concerned countries and CILSS in their drought-related medium-term and long-term recovery and rehabilitation programmes, aim mainly at accelerating the process of socio-economic development, mitigating the effects of possible future droughts, and attaining self-sufficiency in food staples in the countries concerned and in the region as a whole.

18. In discharging its mandate, UNSO carries out the following main activities:

(a) Assisting the countries and their respective regional institutions, in particular CILSS, in the planning and formulation of projects and programmes dealing with the medium-term and long-term recovery and rehabilitation programmes;

(b) Providing assistance in the mobilization of the resources necessary for the implementation of such projects and programmes, either on a bilateral or multilateral basis or through contributions to the United Nations Trust Fund for Sudano-Sahelian Activities;

(c) Managing the Trust Fund and directly implementing, with its resources, projects and programmes not undertaken bilaterally or multilaterally;

(d) Monitoring, reporting and disseminating knowledge on drought-related and desertification control programmes.

19. For its operational activities, UNSO depends entirely on voluntary contributions. Its operational cycle starts with specific priority project requests or proposals and not with available funds. UNSO-assisted projects are identified and formulated as part of comprehensive reviews of sectoral and over-all development plans, carried out in close partnership with the Governments and in co-operation with the regional bodies concerned and competent United Nations agencies. Once a project is identified and given appropriate priority at a national or regional level, UNSO begins resource mobilization activities to secure appropriate funds for its implementation. In summary, the above process is guided by the following principles:

(a) Each project must be identified, approved and given priority by the Government concerned;

(b) Involvement of United Nations agencies must be at the request of the concerned Government(s);

(c) When necessary, UNSO uses its Trust Fund resources to field technical missions to assist Governments in developing project proposals to a degree of detail sufficiently precise to permit an approach to potential donors.

20. The working principles and methods of UNSO are designed to bring flexibility and speed in responding to the needs and priorities emerging from the economic and social conditions of the countries in the Sudano-Sahelian and adjacent regions, and place special emphasis on the strengthening of national capabilities and on the optimal use of national services in project implementation. The Office also finances local and recurrent costs, for specified periods of time, in cases where the Government is not able to meet them and where doing so is considered essential for the sound implementation and long-term impact of the project.

21. All UNSO-assisted projects are executed in accordance with UNDP operational procedures, as followed by the relevant United Nations executing agencies, or are implemented directly by the respective national services; in the latter case, UNDP procedures for government-executed projects are followed. During all phases of project execution, UNSO counts fully on the management and supervisory capacity of UNDP; this responsibility involves the active participation of the UNDP resident representatives in project planning, execution, monitoring and evaluation.

22. The United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office, which has its headquarters in New York, constitutes part of the immediate office of the Administrator of UNDP, and operates under his direct authority and guidance. It has also a regional

office at Ouagadougou, which serves to facilitate close and regular contacts with the countries of the region and CILSS on all aspects of UNSO activities, including planning, programming, resource mobilization, project implementation and monitoring. The Chief of the regional office reports to the Director of UNSO, who in turn reports directly to the Administrator.

VI. MOBILIZATION OF RESOURCES AND THE UNITED NATIONS TRUST FUND FOR SUDANO-SAHELIAN ACTIVITIES

23. The resource mobilization efforts of UNSO are aimed at promoting the participation of donors in the drought-related medium-term and long-term recovery and rehabilitation activities of the eight Sahelian countries. Donors may participate by:

- (a) Undertaking to implement directly a specific priority project or projects;
- (b) Providing funds to the United Nations Trust Fund for Sudano-Sahelian Activities for project implementation, as outlined below.

24. The United Nations Trust Fund for Sudano-Sahelian Activities, of which the custodian is the Secretary-General, is the sole repository of funds with which UNSO carries out its programming and operational responsibilities. Contributions to the Trust Fund can be either earmarked for specific projects (both national and regional), in which case UNSO serves as an over-all co-ordinator of project implementation, or non-earmarked, in which case decisions on allocation of funds and project financing are made in close consultation with the countries concerned. Regular and special reports, as requested, are provided by UNSO to the concerned donors on the disposition of their contributions to the Trust Fund.

25. All operations of the Trust Fund are subject to United Nations rules and regulations. The financial accounts of the Trust Fund, as well as audit statements relating thereto, form part of the financial report and accounts of UNDP.

26. Working closely with the Sudano-Sahelian countries, CILSS and the international donor community, UNSO uses the resources of the Trust Fund, as much as feasible, as "seed money". This is achieved primarily through the fielding of technical missions to assist the respective Governments and CILSS in developing project proposals to a degree of detail sufficiently precise to permit an effective approach to potential donors; the financing of feasibility studies and pilot projects in which interest, even slight, has already been evinced by potential donors; and the promotion of various forms of complementary, joint or parallel financing, combining, as appropriate, the elements of capital investment and technical co-operation required to fund viable projects. Indeed, a pattern is emerging whereby various sources of financing other than and additional to UNSO assume responsibility for various components of large-scale projects, using for this purpose over-all project concepts and designs developed by UNSO. By the use of

such techniques, projects of crucial importance to the countries concerned are formulated in a manner capable of attracting and stimulating the flow of additional financial and material support, along both bilateral and multilateral lines.

27. In working out bilateral and multilateral arrangements under which potential donors implement some priority projects, or parts of them, directly, UNSO is instrumental in providing information on project identification and design, and fostering joint action between donor and recipient Governments.

28. It follows from the above that the achievements of UNSO in the area of resource mobilization should be measured not only by the financing provided by and through the Trust Fund, but also by the contribution of the Office in obtaining substantial additional resources for the implementation of the priority projects in the Sahel.

29. As a result of the expanding operational capability of the Office and the dynamics of project planning and implementation, the number of UNSO-assisted projects under the mandate of drought-related recovery and rehabilitation has increased since 1975 from 52 (21 regional and 31 national), costing at approximately \$153 million, to 113 (25 regional and 88 national), requiring a total financing of \$646 million. ^{4/} By the end of 1980, approximately \$368 million of this amount had become available from various quarters. This included bilateral and multilateral sources, as well as over \$51 million contributed by and through the United Nations Trust Fund for Sudano-Sahelian Activities.

30. At the end of 1980, the over-all number of projects in States members of CILSS formulated under the UNSO mandate of desertification control was 86 (7 regional and 79 national), requiring a financing of approximately \$293 million; of this amount, about \$93 million is already available, including over \$4.5 million from the Trust Fund.

31. Among the main contributors to the Trust Fund are the Governments of Australia, Canada, Denmark, the Federal Republic of Germany, Iran, Italy, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, the Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Sweden, the United States of America and Yugoslavia.

^{4/} All figures quoted are in United States dollars.

VII. PRIORITY PROJECTS IN THE AREA OF DROUGHT-RELATED MEDIUM-TERM AND LONG-TERM RECOVERY AND REHABILITATION

32. The priority projects for which UNSO has been mobilizing resources are those which constitute part of the First Generation Projects, and which were adopted by the Conference of Heads of State of CILSS, held at Banjul on 21 December 1977, as the basis for action for the period from 1977 to 1982. Thus, the assistance which has been provided, both technical and financial, has been, and will continue to be, entirely oriented to the priority needs of the Governments, contributing to the attainment of regional and national recovery and rehabilitation objectives.

33. Projects assisted by UNSO in the area of medium-term and long-term recovery and rehabilitation cover a wide range of activities; they are concentrated in the agricultural sector and include the development and improvement of water resources, forestry and range resources, assistance for the development of irrigation systems, the local manufacture of agricultural tools and equipment, the establishment and operation of seed multiplication programmes, the strengthening of crop protection capabilities, and the development of livestock resources. In addition, special emphasis is given to the development and strengthening of national and regional infrastructures in the fields of feeder road transport systems, storage facilities, telecommunications and agro-meteorological and hydrological services.

34. As has been noted previously, many of the projects falling under the scope of the original mandate of the Office are very closely related to those undertaken within the framework of its mandate for the implementation, in the Sudano-Sahelian region, of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification. The General Assembly, in its resolution 33/88, emphasized, *inter alia*, that it was of vital importance that UNSO should continue to maintain close co-operation with CILSS with a view to the full implementation of the programmes drawn up by the Committee and its member States. Moreover, the close relationship between the projects assisted by UNSO under its two mandates was strongly underlined by the Council of Ministers of CILSS at its twelfth session, held at Ouagadougou in January 1980, at which the Council approved a joint CILSS/UNSO strategy for combating desertification in the Sahel. The strategy was subsequently endorsed at the Conference of Heads of State of CILSS which followed the session of the Council of Ministers. The description of UNSO-assisted regional and national activities which follows includes some of the more important projects undertaken in the CILSS countries under the UNSO desertification control mandate, especially those which have a clear incidence on medium-term and long-term drought-related recovery and rehabilitation activities in the area.

A. Regional projects

Construction, improvement and maintenance of a region-wide system of all-weather feeder roads

35. The United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office, through the resources of the Trust Fund, has initiated a major programme for the construction, improvement and maintenance of a region-wide system of all-weather feeder roads considered essential to provide year-round access to isolated, drought-prone areas, to foster

the recovery, rehabilitation and development of the Sahelian region, and to mitigate the effects of possible future droughts in the national territories of States members of CILSS. Feasibility studies financed by UNSO, covering more than 3,100 kilometres of such feeder roads in Chad, the Gambia, Mali, Mauritania, the Niger, Senegal and the Upper Volta, had been completed in two phases (August 1976 and May 1977) by the United Nations Office of Technical Co-operation. ^{5/} The programme was later extended, with UNSO financing, to Cape Verde.

36. In January 1981, the total feeder roads programme in all the eight Sahelian countries which are members of CILSS covered almost 3,400 kilometres. This included the 3,100 kilometres studied initially, 53 kilometres of roads in Cape Verde, and approximately 235 kilometres added because of (a) new requests from Governments for additions to existing roads and for linking the roads to villages and (b) changes in the alignment of the roads constructed.

37. The updated estimated cost of the programme, at 1980 prices, is close to \$141 million. Of this amount, approximately \$92 million has already been secured for the construction of some 1,900 kilometres of roads, on either a bilateral or multilateral basis, or through contributions to the Trust Fund. Of this \$92 million, UNSO is providing \$55 million for 1,480 kilometres of roads from (a) contributions to the Trust Fund by Canada, the Netherlands, Norway and Saudi Arabia; and (b) contributions of the Federal Republic of Germany, the Netherlands, the United States of America and the United Nations Capital Development Fund under joint action arrangements with UNSO.

38. The construction programme which started in 1977 is being carried out for the most part by government public works departments, and provides for road-building and maintenance equipment and spare parts, construction and operating costs, and technical co-operation components. Particular attention is being paid, in implementing the programme, to questions relating to the establishment of continuous and systematic feeder road maintenance practices, sustained training activities and, in general, the strengthening of the supporting governmental infrastructures.

39. As at January 1981, approximately 955 kilometres of feeder roads had been constructed and were in use in the Gambia, Mali, the Niger, Senegal and the Upper Volta; of these, 700 kilometres have been constructed directly with UNSO participation.

40. The deep involvement of UNSO in the development of the transport sector in the Sahel reflects the importance that the United Nations attaches to the objectives and activities of the Decade for Transport and Communications in Africa; the UNSO region-wide feeder road programme is a significant contribution to the achievement of one of the priority objectives of the Decade, namely, the opening up of land-locked countries and isolated regions by the development and modernization of the transport infrastructure.

^{5/} Now known as the United Nations Department of Technical Co-operation for Development.

41. Further details on the specific aspects of this major regional programme are provided below in the accounts of UNSO-assisted national projects.

Programme of strengthening agro-meteorological and hydrological services

42. Through its resource mobilization efforts, UNSO, jointly with UNDP, has provided strong impetus to the implementation of a major region-wide programme for strengthening agro-meteorological and hydrological services regionally and in individual States members of CILSS. This programme, which plays a significant role in the strategy for the recovery, rehabilitation and development of the Sahelian region, was prepared by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) with the assistance of UNDP. The Office provided \$50,000 for the preparation of the architectural plans of the regional agro-meteorological and hydrological centre at Niamey, the construction of which was completed in 1978. An additional \$2.5 million has been provided by UNSO from Trust Fund resources for the further implementation of this region-wide programme. Through the resource mobilization efforts of UNSO, financing for the programme has also been provided by the Governments of Belgium, France, the Netherlands, Switzerland and the United States of America.

43. The programme is currently entering its second phase, the purpose of which is (a) to strengthen the communication system for the utilization of the data gathered through the meteorological and hydrological observation network, in order to make the network fully operational; and (b) to continue the recruitment and training of national personnel for operating the programme satisfactorily.

Institute of the Sahel

44. By the combined efforts of CILSS and its member States, assisted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), UNDP, UNSO and the international donor community, the Institute of the Sahel, which has the status of a specialized agency of CILSS, was established in 1977. The Institute has the following objectives:

(a) The gathering, analysis and diffusion of the results of the scientific and technical research related to the CILSS recovery and rehabilitation programme;

(b) The transfer to and adaptation in the Sahel of the technologies existing in the region, or in other regions of the world experiencing similar ecological conditions;

(c) Co-ordination and harmonization of the scientific and technical research undertaken in the countries of the region;

(d) Training of research workers and technicians.

45. Since the beginning, UNSO has supported both the establishment and the functioning of the Institute, which has its headquarters at Bamako. In this context, UNSO has allocated \$100,000, complementary to the allocation of \$102,000 made by UNDP, for the preparation of the detailed architectural plans for the Institute. This project, executed by the Office for Projects Execution of UNDP, is

currently under way; bids were invited at the end of 1980 for the services of an architectural firm to design the plans.

46. The United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office also allocated \$131,000, in addition to \$269,000 provided by UNDP, for the organization and implementation by the Institute of a post-graduate training programme in management and conservation of pasture lands for Sahelian high official veterinarians. The training will be provided within the framework of the Ecole Inter-Etats des Sciences de Médecine Vétérinaires of Dakar with the support of UNESCO. The project is designed to build up national expertise in range management and is particularly important in view of the fact that range management and pasture protection are among the priority objectives of a sound desertification control strategy in the Sahelian region.

47. The Office has also collaborated with the Institute in the formulation of plans for the establishment of a department of ecology and renewable energy sources and for the development of its work programme. Negotiations are under way to determine the modalities of UNSO participation in assisting to organize the department.

B. National projects

48. In addition to the regional programmes described above, UNSO continued to provide major support to the Governments of States members of CILSS in the formulation and implementation of a large number of national priority projects. The paragraphs that follow cover (a) most projects in the area of drought-related medium-term and long-term recovery and rehabilitation which are currently under implementation or active preparation, for which full or partial Trust Fund financing has been provided; (b) projects concluded in 1980; and (c) some of the important projects carried out under the UNSO desertification control mandate.

Cape Verde

49. In resolution 35/104 of 5 December 1980, the General Assembly, inter alia, recognized the gravity and urgency of the economic and social problems confronting Cape Verde, an island country classified as a least developed country, afflicted by severe drought, with a serious food shortage, and the country's need for more effective and immediate assistance for the integral implementation of a programme of accelerated development; expressed its grave concern that the expected harvest for 1981 had been lost as the result of the failure of the seasonal rains and the recurrence of drought; and requested the Secretary-General to continue his efforts to mobilize the necessary resources for implementing the programme of development assistance to Cape Verde.

50. In the area of UNSO-assisted priority programmes, important activities dealing with feeder road and inter-island marine transportation systems have been carried out or are being developed.

51. In this connexion, \$247,000 was provided by UNSO for the strengthening of the capabilities of the Cape Verde Public Works Department. This included the formulation of the plan of action required, as well as the provision of technical

assistance, equipment and spare parts. The implementation of the project has resulted in a major reorganization of the central maintenance workshop of the Ministry of Public Works, giving it, among other things, the capability to install and manage an inventory of spare parts, which was also provided by the project. It also provided extensive on-the-job training for all workshop personnel and developed a strong maintenance capability in the public works service, including that of repairing heavy road-building equipment.

52. In addition, UNSO also financed two feasibility studies: the first, carried out in 1978, covered the construction of 100 kilometres of priority mountain roads on the islands of Santo Antão and São Tiago; the second, carried out in early 1981, concerned the construction of 53 kilometres of roads on the islands of Boa Vista and Maio. The Office is already engaged, at the request of the Government, in the mobilization of resources to allow for the early implementation of the second project; a joint action arrangement is currently envisaged with the collaboration of the United Nations Capital Development Fund.

53. In addition, in view of the special circumstances of the archipelago of Cape Verde, UNSO also financed a study to formulate a programme to develop an inter-island transportation system. On the basis of the study, UNSO, at the request of the Government, proposed the project to the international community for its financing, either on a bilateral basis or through contributions to the Trust Fund. The response was encouraging and negotiations are under way to work out appropriate financial arrangements.

54. In 1980, a \$100,000, UNSO-financed and Government-executed project for water control and anti-erosion works in São João Baptista Valley was successfully completed. Following that, UNSO agreed, in the context of its desertification control mandate, to provide an amount of \$115,000 for the continuation of those project activities, which are considered of great importance by the Government.

55. Within the framework of its desertification control mandate, UNSO plans to contribute, in 1981, an amount of \$900,000 for equipment, operating costs and technical co-operation to strengthen the national capabilities in the management of underground and surface water resources in several islands of the country.

56. All UNSO project activities in Cape Verde are fully co-ordinated with the Office of the Secretary-General, pursuant to relevant resolutions of the General Assembly on assistance to that country.

Chad

57. In resolution 34/120 of 14 December 1979, the General Assembly, inter alia, expressed its deep concern about the massive destruction of property and the serious damage to the economic and social infrastructure of Chad caused by the progressive deterioration of the political situation marked by armed conflict during the past 13 years, and stressed the urgent need for international action to assist the Government of Chad in its efforts for the reconstruction, rehabilitation and development of the country. The Assembly also requested the Secretary-General to organize an international programme of financial, technical and material assistance

to Chad to enable it to meet its needs with respect to reconstruction, rehabilitation and development; to dispatch a mission to Chad to review with the Government the aid which it needed in that regard; and to report to the Assembly at its thirty-fifth session.

58. In the report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly at its thirty-fifth session (A/35/488), it was noted that there had been no improvement in the political situation in Chad since the adoption of the resolution. It was further stated that until such time as the security situation improved, it would not be possible for a United Nations mission to visit the country to discuss with the authorities of Chad the country's reconstruction, rehabilitation and development needs; the Secretary-General would continue to be in close contact with the situation, and would ensure that every effort was made to mobilize international assistance as soon as hostilities ceased.

59. The General Assembly, having considered the situation, adopted resolution 35/92, in which it, inter alia, took into account the above-mentioned report; expressed its deep concern about the massive destruction of property and the serious damage to the economic and social infrastructure of Chad caused by the progressive deterioration of the political situation marked by armed conflict during the past 14 years; and affirmed the urgent need for international action to assist the Government of Chad in its efforts for the reconstruction, rehabilitation and development of the country.

60. The Assembly also pointed out that Chad was in a particularly disadvantageous position as one of the least developed countries which was land-locked and suffering from drought and, inter alia, requested the Secretary-General (a) to organize an international programme of financial, technical and material assistance to Chad to enable it to meet its short-term and long-term needs with respect to reconstruction, rehabilitation and development; and (b) to dispatch a mission to Chad, as soon as peace was restored, to review with the Government its needs for the reconstruction, rehabilitation and development of the country, and to communicate the report of the mission to the international community.

61. The United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office, within the framework of its original mandate, keeps the situation in Chad under constant review, and as soon as circumstances permit, will resume its drought-related recovery and rehabilitation activities in the country.

62. Before internal events impeded further implementation of UNSO-assisted activities, its most extensive venture in the country had been the feeder road construction and maintenance project. As a result of UNSO resource mobilization efforts, two financial agreements had been signed for a total amount of \$7,217,000, in addition to \$195,833 of government contribution, for the implementation of the programme. Road-building equipment and spare parts in the amount of \$2.4 million had been provided to equip a special mechanized brigade for the purpose of constructing and maintaining approximately 260 kilometres of feeder roads; in addition, UNSO financing provided for all operational costs of the brigade. The project's base at N'Djamena had been completed, and 150 kilometres of existing roads, providing access to the planned feeder road sites, had been repaired.

Gambia

63. Two financial agreements have been signed for a total amount of \$4,821,681, in addition to \$100,000 contributed by the Government, for the feeder road construction and maintenance project. Over \$1.5 million of road-building equipment and spare parts have been procured internationally and are now at the work site. The special construction brigade, created by the Government and supported with equipment, technical advisers and operational costs provided through the Trust Fund, is operating at the work site. At the end of 1980, more than 180 kilometres of road had been completed. Moreover, the Federal Republic of Germany will provide further support to this priority project by contributing an amount of DM 4.4 million to enable the extension of the project under joint action arrangements with UNSO; this will allow for the construction of approximately 80 more kilometres of roads. Additional feeder road construction has been also undertaken through bilateral arrangements with the European Development Fund, the African Development Fund, and the Islamic Development Bank.

64. In August 1980, a project was completed for the drilling and equipment of deep-bore wells to provide water for both humans and cattle, at a cost of \$856,200. The project, fully financed from Trust Fund resources and executed by the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development, complemented other projects financed by UNDP and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) for the exploration and development of underground water resources.

65. A follow-up project is now under way to strengthen a maintenance unit for deep-bore wells recently established within the framework of the Ministry of Water Resources and Environment. The total estimated cost of this project is \$258,000, of which \$88,000 is provided by UNSO from the Trust Fund and the rest by the Government. The contribution of the Office will be used for the procurement of spare parts for the already installed pumps, and for equipment needed to maintain and repair the existing installations at the wells. Technical assistance will be provided through a UNDP project on rural water resources for which the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development is executing agency.

66. Activities in the field of desertification control have continued to develop during 1980. A major project entitled "Survey and Energy Master Plan for the Gambia" was prepared and negotiated during the year with the Government, and approved in February 1981. The total cost of the project is \$310,000, of which \$150,000 is being provided by UNSO from the resources of the Trust Fund. The project, executed by the World Bank, will provide the Gambian Government with an analysis of the energy requirements of the country for the next 10 years, including renewable energy, and a proposed strategy to meet that demand. Since 80 per cent of the total energy used in the Gambia derives from wood and wood by-products, this project is particularly important from the point of view of the country's policies for the rational utilization, preservation and conservation of its forest and other natural resources. The preparation of the Energy Master Plan started in March 1981, and publication is due in the last trimester of 1981.

Mali

67. Since the outset of the feeder road construction and maintenance programme, three financial agreements have been signed for a total amount of \$22,456,000, in addition to \$544,000 contributed by the Government of Mali. More than \$5,350,000 of road-building equipment and spare parts have by now been provided to the project and are currently at the work site. The special brigade created by the Government, and supported with equipment, technical advisers and operational costs provided by UNSO from Trust Fund resources for the purpose of constructing and maintaining the Kolokani-Didiéni-Goumbou link of 218 kilometres, is in full operation; over 200 kilometres of this road have been constructed. The second project, namely the Ansongo-Anderamboukane link of 310 kilometres, is being carried out under a subcontract arrangement with a private firm; over 250 kilometres of this link have been completed, with the financial support of the Netherlands.

68. At the beginning of 1981, UNSO allocated \$100,000 for the purchase of vaccines for the protection of cattle in the drought-stricken north-western part of the country. Simultaneously, UNSO initiated negotiations with the FAO Office of Special Relief Operations for an additional amount of \$150,000 to be applied towards this project, to ensure that an adequate supply of vaccines and medicines would be made available, as well as to provide for some necessary equipment and cold storage facilities. The project, which will be executed by the Office of Special Relief Operations, will also receive technical support from the FAO livestock project currently under way in the region.

69. In addition, in connexion with its desertification control mandate, UNSO initiated and financed, at the beginning of 1981, at the request of the Government, a mission to formulate a programme for establishing multipurpose tree plantations in the Gao region. On the basis of the findings of the mission, a first phase project will be launched in this area in May 1981, with UNSO financing in the amount of \$300,000.

Mauritania

70. A financial agreement was signed in October 1980 for a total amount of \$4.3 million under joint action arrangements between the United Nations Capital Development Fund (\$2.8 million), UNSO (\$1.5 million) and the Government (\$250,000) to finance a project for feeder road construction and maintenance. Over \$2.6 million of road-building equipment will be provided by the Fund to equip a special brigade for the purpose of constructing and maintaining, in a first phase, approximately 60 kilometres of feeder roads; UNSO financing will be utilized to provide for the operational costs of the brigade, including the employment and training of local personnel and technical assistance. Extension of the project is currently being negotiated with the collaboration of a bilateral aid programme.

71. A feasibility study, financed by UNSO and executed by the UNDP Office for Projects Execution, for the construction and operation of a large-scale grain storage system was completed in 1979, at a cost of \$32,000, and moved into the implementation stage. On the basis of the results of the study, the Government of the Netherlands decided to contribute \$4.5 million to the construction of a system

of storage facilities with a total capacity of 20,000 tons. In addition, a joint UNSO/African Development Bank programming mission was carried out and, as a consequence, the African Development Fund has agreed to the parallel financing of this project in an amount of over \$6 million for the additional construction of storage facilities, with a total capacity of 30,000 tons, mainly in rural production centres. The part of the project directly financed by the Government of the Netherlands is now under way.

72. The implementation of a project which aims to equip and maintain 36 deep-bore wells, based on a feasibility study completed by the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development in May 1977, is under way as a joint financial venture of the Government of Mauritania, the African Development Fund (\$4 million) and UNSO (\$1.2 million). The construction of the pumping stations is now almost completed, and it is expected that 28 stations will become operative during the second quarter of 1981; UNSO will take an active part in setting up an appropriate and systematic maintenance system for those stations and will finance their operating costs for a period of two years.

73. Also under implementation is an UNSO-financed project, executed by the FAO Office of Special Relief Operations and the national services concerned, providing for the procurement of improved seeds and for support to the seed multiplication centre at Kaédi at a cost of \$281,000; the UNSO financing is aimed at providing for the improvement of the physical facilities and for the strengthening of the ongoing activities of the centre, which was established and has been operating with UNDP support.

74. In the context of its desertification control mandate, UNSO undertook several activities related to the process of drought recovery and rehabilitation in Mauritania. Apart from financing the preparation of an action plan to combat desertification in the country (\$40,000) and the formulation of a project for the protection and management of pastoral lands in south-eastern Mauritania (\$20,000), UNSO has contributed an amount of \$140,000 for the preparation of a comprehensive programme of sand dune fixation. As a first phase of this programme, a scientific analysis of sand movement has been carried out; following that, in a second phase, a methodology to control sand movements will be devised, and a substantial programme of operational activities relating to sand fixation will be prepared.

75. In order to assure the recovery and rehabilitation of the region of Kiffa in south-western Mauritania, UNSO played a catalytic role in mobilizing \$4.5 million for a programme of earth dam construction and rehabilitation. The United Nations Office of Emergency Operations, UNDP, the United Nations Capital Development Fund and UNSO agreed, in the context of a consortium agreement signed by all parties concerned in January 1981, to finance this project, the specific aims of which are to repair 15 earth dams and to construct 4 new ones over a period of three years. This project will be executed jointly by FAO and the UNDP Office for Projects Execution.

Niger

76. An agreement for the financing of the feeder road construction and maintenance programme was signed in February 1981 for a total amount of \$6,279,000 under joint action arrangements between the United Nations Capital Development Fund (\$2,250,000), UNSO (\$4,029,000) and the Government (\$200,000). Over \$2 million of road-building equipment has been provided from the Fund's contribution to equip a special brigade for the purpose of constructing and maintaining, in a first phase, approximately 140 kilometres of feeder roads; UNSO financing will be utilized to provide for the operational costs of the brigade, including the employment and training of local personnel and technical assistance.

77. In December 1979, the first part of a project, financed by UNSO and executed by the ILO and the Government, for the local manufacture of agricultural tools and equipment was completed at a cost of \$1,090,000. A central workshop was established in the Tahoua region, with a training unit attached, and production of tools and equipment initiated. A second phase of the project, extending until March 1981, again financed by UNSO and executed by the ILO and the Government, was then approved. During this phase, the cost of which is \$1 million, production reached an annual level of 2,500 oxcarts and ploughs, and training has been provided to a number of the workers at the central workshop of Tahoua, as well as to village blacksmiths who are to be assigned to decentralized local workshops. Three such local facilities have already been established; their personnel provide maintenance and repair services to farmers of the surrounding villages, and also execute subcontracts for the central workshop.

78. During the technical evaluation of the project, which took place in December 1980, it was concluded that the second phase should be followed by an intermediate phase, to be financed by UNDP for the amount of \$120,000. During this phase, the project will be further consolidated and a detailed operational plan for its final phase will be prepared. It is expected that this last phase will involve a contribution by the United Nations Capital Development Fund of about \$850,000, with approximately the same amount from UNSO resources.

79. Another project in progress is the hydro-agricultural development of the Birni-N'Konni Plain, extending over an area of 2,700 ha, to which UNSO contributed an amount of \$1 million, used for the construction, directly by the Government, of the principal 15-kilometre-long irrigation channel, connecting the dam with the irrigation site. The first part of this development, involving an area of 1,500 ha, has been completed, and the first harvest took place during the 1980 agricultural season. The basic groundwork for the next stage of the project has been finalized and UNSO, in co-operation with and on behalf of the Government, has already presented some of its major components to various potential sources of financing.

80. In the area of desertification control, intense planning and programming activities took place during 1980 and several projects were discussed and prepared with the Government, in particular "Operation Gao" in the Dallol Bosso and the Dallol Maouri, which aim at making optimal use, within the mixed-farming agriculture practised by the farmers of those two densely populated regions, of the potential of the tree faidherbia albida as a source of fodder and seeds, and as a soil regeneration agent.

81. Formulation missions were also fielded and resource mobilization activities initiated in 1980 and 1981 for a project aiming at establishing green belts around eight urban centres of the country, and for carrying out critically important anti-erosion work in the Majia River basin to protect the agricultural potential of the area, as well as the Birni-N'Konni barrages and irrigation network, from over-rapid siltation.

82. In March 1980, a project entitled "Green Belt around Niamey" was reviewed with positive results at the second meeting of the Consultative Group for Desertification Control held at Nairobi, and its implementation has been initiated with UNEP financing of \$60,000 and UNSO funds amounting to \$42,000. The project is being executed by the Government, and uses all the experience gained in a similar undertaking carried out in the area of Niamey under bilateral financing.

Senegal

83. The feeder road construction and maintenance programme is under way with financing in the amount of \$4.4 million; this includes \$2.6 million provided from Trust Fund resources and \$1.8 million contributed by the Government in the form of road-building equipment. By the end of 1980, the construction team was able to construct or rehabilitate 7 kilometres of the Fimela-Samba Dia road and 27 kilometres of the Samba Dia-Djifère road, and constructed 17 kilometres of the Samba Dia-Joal road. About 10 kilometres of roads leading to villages and quarries were also opened. The project has also permitted maintenance, on a regular basis, of all these roads.

84. A project was completed in 1979 for the development of an integrated system of water supply for the northern littoral of Senegal. The feasibility study for this project was made by the World Health Organization (WHO) with UNDP financing. The project, towards the financing of which UNSO contributed \$1 million, was also financially supported by the Government and UNDP, and was executed by the national services concerned and the UNDP Office for Projects Execution. The implementation of the project resulted in a substantial increase in the water supply for the city of Dakar, thus preventing a serious water shortage for the growing population of the city.

85. As a further contribution to the management of water resources in the country, a pilot project to test methods for the artificial recharge of an aquifer in a limestone area to prevent salt-water infiltration was prepared and implemented in 1980, jointly by UNSO and UNDP, with the UNDP Office for Projects Execution as executing agency. The contribution of UNSO, made as part of its desertification control mandate, was \$100,000 and that of UNDP \$27,000. The results achieved by this pilot project have been used to formulate an important project entitled "Management and Conservation of Underground Water Resources", which will be presented at the third meeting of the Consultative Group for Desertification Control, to be held at Nairobi in August 1981.

86. The desertification control pilot project for the development of the Tobor Forest in the Casamance region has continued during 1980. The project aims at developing and testing a management plan which, in the long term, will protect the

Casamance Forest, while permitting its rational exploitation through (a) facilitating its natural regeneration by the selected felling of dead and degenerating trees; and (b) systematic reforestation, within productive zones, with commercial varieties. It is expected that the financing of these operations will be ensured by revenues accruing from sales of timber and charcoal. The project, for which UNSO has allocated \$1 million, is executed by FAO.

87. The project should also allow the Government to decide, by the end of 1981, whether or not it is feasible to establish a national company, which would have as its main objectives the preservation and development of the main Casamance forests according to techniques perfected by the pilot project, thus saving them from progressive degeneration and eventual disappearance. As in the case of the pilot project, the protection and reforestation activities would be financed by the sale of charcoal and the marketing of timber. It is estimated that enough charcoal could be produced in the Casamance forests to meet the needs of Dakar and some other northern urban centres; this in turn would reduce the excessive felling of timber around those towns, an important factor in the dynamics of desertification in Senegal.

88. In 1980, UNSO started negotiations with the United Nations Capital Development Fund for its participation in the financing of two other projects, namely the development of fisheries in the Lake of Guiers, and an integrated programme for sand dune fixation which includes the protection of vegetable cultivation in dune hollows in the northern littoral. The formulation of the first project took place in January 1981 and will provide the basis for further negotiations with the Fund. The feasibility study for the dune fixation project is now completed and financing in the amount of \$850,000 is under active consideration by the Fund.

Upper Volta

89. The feeder road construction and maintenance programme has been financed by UNSO in the amount of \$2,621,940 and by a government contribution of \$700,000 in the form of road-building equipment, provided by assistance from the Federal Republic of Germany. The construction phase of the programme is now being carried out by the national service concerned. As at February 1981, more than 100 kilometres of roads had been constructed. Additional feeder road construction has been undertaken through bilateral arrangements with the Governments of Canada and the United States of America.

90. Furthermore, UNSO is providing \$303,000 for two Government-executed projects for the development of underground water resources: the project in the Regional Development Organization (ORD) Centre-Ouest has already been completed, while the project in ORD de la Volta Noire is under way. The first project has been financed within the original mandate of UNSO in an amount of \$100,000, while the second project has been financed under the second mandate in an amount of \$203,000.

91. In the context of its desertification control mandate, UNSO undertook several activities directly related to rehabilitation and recovery from the drought. In particular, UNSO is developing a comprehensive programme of forestry activities to combat desertification in the country, aiming, in particular, at strengthening the

national capabilities of the forestry department in the area of local plantation at village level with active villager participation. In a first stage, UNSO has contributed \$333,500 to the rehabilitation and management of the Saponé Forest near Ouagadougou; this contribution will be increased in the near future in order to extend the scope of the project.

92. In the same sector, UNSO is also currently financing feasibility studies for the conservation and optimal utilization of the Tiogo Forest in the north-west of the country, as well as for the introduction of acacia senegal plantations in the Regional Development Organization of the Sahel. Financing for these projects is now under negotiation with potential donors and they are expected to start before the end of 1981.

VIII. CO-OPERATION WITH THE PERMANENT INTER-STATE COMMITTEE ON DROUGHT CONTROL IN THE SAHEL AND OTHER MATTERS

The Permanent Inter-State Committee on Drought Control in the Sahel

93. In the planning and programming of priority projects, as well as in resource mobilization and in the allocation of resources from the United Nations Trust Fund for Sudano-Sahelian Activities, UNSO consults closely with the Permanent Inter-State Committee on Drought Control in the Sahel and its Council of Ministers and Executive Secretary; day-to-day contacts are maintained with the secretariat of the Committee through the UNSO regional office at Ouagadougou. The Office and the Committee regularly review the modalities of their co-operation to ensure continued relevancy and effectiveness. Such contacts are characteristic of the close working relationship between UNSO and the Committee, and provide for the systematic and continuous participation of the States members in all aspects of UNSO activities aimed at the recovery and rehabilitation of the Sahel.

94. In June 1980, UNSO participated in the thirteenth session of the Council of Ministers, held at Niamey, and presented a report on the progress of the recovery and rehabilitation activities, as well as the desertification control activities, assisted by the United Nations system through UNSO. Following its review of the report, the Council of Ministers, in its final communiqué, congratulated UNSO on the results achieved in resource mobilization and project implementation, and urged it to continue its efforts.

95. At its fourteenth session, held at Praia in January 1981, the Council of Ministers reiterated its support of the close and effective working relationship existing between the Committee and UNSO, and expressed its satisfaction with the constructive role played by UNSO in developing drought-related recovery and rehabilitation and desertification control projects, as well as for its resource mobilization activities.

Club du Sahel

96. The United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office has continued to participate regularly in all meetings and working groups jointly established by CILSS and the

Club du Sahel to define medium-term and long-term multisectoral, sectoral and subsectoral strategies to combat drought and desertification in the Sahel. In this connexion, UNSO participated in March 1980 in the sectoral donor meeting for livestock activities at Bamako and, in July 1980, in the sectoral donor meeting on ecology, forestry and fisheries, held in Paris. The Office also participated in the fourth high-level conference convened by CILSS and the Club in Kuwait, in November 1980, to review the medium-term and long-term strategy of CILSS as well as the relationship between the Club and CILSS.

Co-operation with United Nations agencies and other organizations and institutions

97. In carrying out its functions and responsibilities, UNSO co-operates closely with all relevant United Nations agencies and institutions, in particular with UNESCO, UNEP, FAO, the ILO, WMO, WHO, UNIDO, the World Bank, UNICEF, the United Nations Capital Development Fund, UNFPA and IFAD; close contacts are maintained with regional commissions, in particular with the Economic Commission for Africa, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and the Economic Commission for Western Asia.

98. The United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office co-operates closely with the FAO Office of Special Relief Operations, whose mandate includes, inter alia, the responsibility to help alleviate, on an emergency basis, the hardships suffered by the Sahelian countries as a result of the drought and other natural causes; similarly, UNSO co-operates closely with WFP in its area of competence. In both instances, UNSO pursues its activities in close co-ordination with the two institutions, and contributes to the effectiveness of their emergency relief operations by undertaking mutually agreed-upon projects with medium-term implications.

99. Close working contacts have been also established with the United Nations University (UNU); in January 1981, the first workshop on the management of arid and semi-arid lands in the Sahel was organized jointly by UNSO and UNU at Ouagadougou, in co-operation with the University of Ouagadougou.

100. The Office also maintains close working relationships with concerned regional and intergovernmental organizations, notably with the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the Economic Community of West Africa (CEAO) and the various river and lake basin commissions in the region. Of special interest, in this connexion, was the joint OAU/UNSO/FAO/UNESCO mission, organized in 1980, for the formulation of a programme for the restoration and conservation of the Fouta-Djallon massif in Guinea, with its profound implications for the major rivers of West Africa; the report of this mission has been adopted by OAU, which requested the United Nations to undertake further joint actions in this area. As for CEAO, co-operative agreement providing for closer organizational and working contacts between the Community and UNSO was signed in September 1980 at Ouagadougou.

101. As previously emphasized, a particularly close and effective working relationship exists between UNSO and the Regional Bureau for Africa and the Regional Bureau for Arab States of UNDP, on all matters affecting their respective programme activities.

Technical co-operation among developing countries

102. In all its activities, UNSO carefully and systematically fosters the concept of technical co-operation among developing countries. In this connexion, UNSO actively participated in the regional meetings of governmental experts of Africa and of the Arab States for technical co-operation among developing countries, as well as in the first meeting of the High-level Committee on the Review of Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries, all of which were held in May/June 1980. The Office has also collaborated with the Special Unit for Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries of UNDP in the preparation of a report on the role and potential of such co-operation in desertification control. This report, which will be considered during the second meeting of the High-level Committee in June 1981, provides an introduction to desertification control techniques and suggests certain areas in which the concept of technical co-operation among developing countries could be effectively applied. In its own operations, UNSO utilizes expertise from developing countries as much as possible in the formulation, implementation and evaluation phases of its work, and fosters the exchange of relevant experience among the countries of the Sudano-Sahelian region, as well as between them and those located in other arid regions of the world.

United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries

103. Of the eight countries members of CILSS, six have been designated least developed countries and four are land-locked. In the geographically broader perspective of the UNSO desertification control mandate, of the 18 countries which UNSO is assisting, 11 are least developed countries and 5 are land-locked. ^{6/} The General Assembly, in its resolution 3054 (XXVIII) of 17 October 1973, requested the developed countries and the specialized agencies to grant those countries affected by the drought which did not enjoy them benefits similar to those given to the least developed countries with respect to the specific consequences of the drought and until those consequences were eliminated. In its resolution 35/106 of 5 December 1980, the Assembly decided to authorize the Economic and Social Council to consider, at its first regular session of 1981, the question of adding two of the countries coming under the scope of the UNSO second mandate, namely, Djibouti and Guinea-Bissau, to the list of the least developed countries, on the basis of existing criteria and the most recent data available.

104. In general, because of the very nature of its mandates, UNSO tends to assist projects which centre on the problems and living conditions of the poorest segments of the population, regardless of whether they live in countries officially designated as least developed or in areas of extreme natural, economic and social hardship in countries not so designated. Most of the UNSO-assisted programmes and projects extend to marginal lands affected, frequently to the point of near destruction, by drought, soil erosion and progressive desertification, where everyday life is often at the minimum subsistence level.

^{6/} Benin, which the Governing Council of UNEP, in May 1981, is to consider including in the list of countries which receive assistance, through UNSO, in implementing the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification, is also classified as a least developed country.

105. The activities of UNSO, under both mandates, are therefore directly relevant to the work of the United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, which is to be held in Paris from 1 to 14 September 1981 (see General Assembly resolution 35/205), and to the preparation of the Substantial New Programme of Action for the 1980s which should be finalized and adopted by the Conference, as called for in resolution 122 (V) of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. In this connexion, at the request of the Governments concerned, UNSO has been co-operating with them to ensure that projects elaborated under the mandates of drought-related recovery and rehabilitation, as well as desertification control, aiming at alleviating some of the conditions described above, are given adequate consideration in the consolidated country presentations which will be submitted to the Conference.

1980 United Nations Pledging Conference for Development Activities

106. In November 1980, UNSO participated, for the first time, in the United Nations Pledging Conference for Development Activities. In this connexion, the General Assembly, in its resolution 35/86, strongly urged all Governments to make special efforts to increase the resources of UNSO, including voluntary contributions through the United Nations Pledging Conference for Development Activities, so as to enable it to respond more fully to the priority requirements of the Governments of the States members of CILSS.

107. While the recovery and rehabilitation programmes of the States members of CILSS are moving forward toward achieving their stated objectives, a great deal remains to be done. The task at hand requires determined and continuous effort, as well as long-term commitment of support. Under present conditions, many countries in the Sahel will unfortunately continue to endure serious hardships, including food shortages, until the impact of their efforts, strengthened by external support, is fully felt.

108. Indeed, the problems posed by drought and desertification are enormous, and have far-reaching and complex implications for the development process in the Sudano-Sahelian countries. As it has been stated repeatedly before, there is sufficient scientific knowledge and technology available in the world today to solve many of these problems; however, it is also imperative that this knowledge and technology should be applied in a more intense and concerted manner, in order to maximize the impact of the available resources. There is also a very urgent need for the future expansion of the resources made available to Governments of the Sudano-Sahelian countries to help them deal effectively with these problems. The task is immense and must be handled by those involved with a sense of urgency conveyed by the General Assembly and other organs of the United Nations system, and dramatically underlined again in 1980 by the renewed pressures of drought and desertification on the economic and agricultural potentials of the Sudano-Sahelian countries.
